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WHEN YOU ENLIST

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MARGARET SLATTERY

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DEDICATION

To the Youth who for love of the Great Commander have pledged themselves to his cause, joined the noble army of his church and stand ready to obey orders without thought of self or safety — to go forth to battle for righteousness, justice, peace and good will, until hate shall be banished from the earth and love shall rule. — *The Author.*

" Hope will help the world, faith will give it strength, but love will save it."

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Chapter I
THE NOBLE ARMY

The Son of God goes forth to war
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar;
Who follows in his train?

. . . . . .

A noble army, men and boys,
The matron and the maid,

. . . . . .

They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil and pain:
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.

Amen.

CHAPTER I

The Noble Army

The chimes in the church tower are ringing. The seats, save a group directly in front of the pulpit, are already filled. The air is fragrant with the perfume of lovely flowers. There are palms on either side of the great organ. The bells seem to be singing the very words of the last lines of the hymn, "O God, to us may grace be given to follow in their train." The great organ joins a glorious and triumphant Amen — then plays softly while two doors open and men and women, boys and girls enter and quietly take the vacant seats. Today, amidst the beauty of the flowers, the sweetness of the music, the friendliness of all the people, they will unite with the church, they will join the noble army of those who through the ages have "climbed the steep ascent of heaven through peril, toil and pain." While the organ sounds a challenge or plays a hymn of gratitude and hope, all over America the church will welcome with joy those who have come to help in its great battle with selfishness — with sin.

Some of the groups are small — six people, ten

people — in one place only two, in another over a hundred, but all coming to enlist in the army. Some of the churches where they sit are very small — one is a tiny, white church away up on a hilltop, in a little country town; one is a lonely church where two roads cross the wide prairie; one has a high, slender steeple reaching away up above the blackened houses of a coal-mining town; another has a square tower that can be seen for miles across the white sands on the very edge of the desert. But others are large, like the one whose chimes were ringing — hundreds of people can find seats in them; they have several towers standing out clear against the blue sky; they are like great cathedrals in brownstone or marble or soft red brick that is very old; the carpets upon the aisles are heavy, silencing every footstep; the windows are beautiful pictures where one sees old stories told in tiny, delicate bits of glass, rich in color. But whether the churches be large or small, in noisy city, verdant country, lonely prairie or desert, through them the people sitting there close to the palms and the lilies are to join the noble army of which every church is itself a part.

Most of those who are to join are young and that is what rejoices the hearts of the people who have, for many years, been in the army them-

selves. They know how much an army that has a noble past and a great future needs *youth* and the strength and courage that only youth can give.

A few moments and the simple service which will make these young people and their friends members of the great host of men and boys, women and girls, all over the world, that have chosen Jesus Christ for their leader and the cross for their banner, will be over. They will enter the army in many different ways; many different creeds will be said; many different questions beginning, "Do you believe?" will be answered according to the teaching of the church, and the answers will differ greatly, but every one, regardless of the name of the special division he is to join, will pledge his allegiance to Jesus Christ and promise to share his purpose and help to carry out his program for saving the world from its selfishness, its hate, its sin.

It is an easy thing to join the noble army today; especially easy in America, although it is not easy to keep faithful and never fail it, or play the coward in it, or misunderstand its orders, or shirk its duties, or desert it, or dishonor it, in thought or word or deed; that is hard, as hard as it ever was. But there was a time when the noble army was small and just beginning its march

against evil, when joining it took unbounded courage.

A while ago I stood in a spot in old Rome that made me remember those early days when the young men and women, the boys and girls, as well as those who were old, were obliged to live down under the earth for safety, hidden away in dark trenches dug in the solid rock — because they were Christians. I was standing that day in the Coliseum. The grass was green, there were tiny, fragrant flowers half hidden in it. I looked at the seats of solid rock as you have seen them rising tier upon tier in the famous pictures. They were empty now, but in that day of which I was thinking they were crowded with the rich and great of Rome and their friends from all the provinces. I looked at the doors on either side of the great wall of stone, low, close to the ground. Here in that other day when the noble army was beginning, hidden behind the door on one side, was a Christian. Often it was a young and very beautiful girl, sometimes it was a tall, strong boy, pale but unafraid, again it was a group of people, old and young. Behind the other door, there was hidden the lion, fierce, hungry, lashing his tail wildly, eager to kill. The door opened and girl or boy came out onto the green grass and faced the scornful, shouting crowd crying "*death.*"

Then the other door opened, there was a terrible roar and the lion sprang forth to kill his helpless victim while the crowd applauded. That is what it meant to be an acknowledged member of the band of Christians, one of the noble army, in that early day. But if they of that army had failed, had run away, had gone back to worship the images in the pagan temple and be safe, had sung the hymns no more, had tried to forget Christ, had disobeyed his command to love God and their neighbors, it would not have been possible for you to stand quietly amidst the beauty of the flowers and the thrilling music and join the church to help it in its battle against the enemies of today. But they were good soldiers, they lived splendidly and they died gloriously without fear; that is why they have the right, from the pages of history, from the pictures and poems and stories of that long-ago day, to challenge you to be worthy of the great company you join when your minister takes your hand and tells you that, having been baptized and in the presence of all the people pledged your honor to the church, you are now a member of the noble army — grown so great through all the centuries that no one can number it. Their courage and faith and the wisdom and bravery of those who followed after them all through the years, have made the army strong,

just as your courage, honesty and love of right will make it an even greater army for those who follow you.

Each century the noble army that formed itself into the church had a different battle to fight. Sometimes its warfare was against evil and injustice in governments; sometimes it must fight against kings; sometimes its fight was against ignorance, so it must teach; sometimes it was against envy and jealousy in its own ranks, and it must pray, repent and conquer itself; sometimes it was against the cruel selfishness of the rich and powerful, and it must speak bravely and call upon those who thought themselves great, to be just and kind. Although this meant prison and death, they did not hesitate. They made many blunders, but always in the ranks there were some who were wise and unafraid. Again and again the army divided because there was disagreement over what they thought the Bible meant and taught, but always there were souls courageous enough to follow the light of new knowledge and find out more about God. Sometimes one division was forced to leave its comrades behind while it crossed mountains, rivers, went through dangerous forests, or over great, unknown seas in search of truth.

There came periods in the history of the noble

army when whole divisions of it forgot their Commander, forgot his two great commands, forgot that he said that his kingdom was founded on love; bitter hatred grew, there were desertions, petty quarrels, terrible persecutions; the world with its sickness, poverty and great need was forgotten and it seemed as though the army that had fought its enemies so bravely, might destroy itself. When the days were darkest, new leaders came to call old warriors back to service and to gain new, young, strong recruits; so the army went on. When you go to college or when you grow older and want to really know for yourself about the history of religion and the church, you will read the entire story of the Christian faith and be thrilled by those great days in the long-ago; some days which, when you read about them, will make you blush for the blindness and sins of the church, and other days that will make you unspeakably proud and happy that you can belong to so great a company.

You will find pages in the story of the church as interesting as any book you have ever read; the days after the Bible was printed in the language spoken by the people in the various countries instead of in the Latin and the Greek which only the priests and the scholars could read. What preachers there were in the days that fol-

lowed, when men could read the Bible for themselves! There were preachers with audiences so great that no building could hold them and they must preach in the fields, preachers so eloquent that people followed them about from place to place, often with nowhere to sleep and with little food, forgetting everything except their great desire to hear more.

You will read of the days after the church began to think again about other lands and other people not Christian and will see a new division of the noble army, strong men and beautiful women, young, full of joy and eager to help the world, leaving their homes and going to the far-away countries of the world about which men knew so little; going in sailing vessels because a boat driven by steam had never even been dreamed of; sailing away to the ends of the earth when there was no telegraph and mail took months and even years to reach them. They went to Africa, they went to India, to China, they went to the cannibal islands. In the face of danger, they were unafraid. Surrounded by people not one word of whose speech they understood, they patiently learned the difficult language and dialect; though food was so different and some of it, like the raw fish, so disagreeable, yet they learned to eat it. They lived in scorching jungles surrounded by head-

hunting savages; they lived in desolate lands covered with ice and snow. No place was so hot, so bitterly cold, so ignorant, so lonely, so surrounded by danger from famine and fever, from serpents and savages, that they said, "This is too hard; I will go back." They did not come back until they had told the story they went to tell and translated it into strange, difficult tongues that the people might read it for themselves. No modern novel has in it the excitement, the thrills, the narrow escapes, the romance that you can find in the lives of some of these young men and women who, in the early days, joined the army and went out on the great missionary adventures.

Something of this story of the noble army, men and boys, women and girls, who, through the centuries since Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, have been making up the Christian church, will be told in the chapters that follow in this book. As you read it, you will admire and love the great heroes about whom it will tell you, and you will think of all the millions of others who helped them to do their great work. You will see that whenever the noble army met defeat, it was because of selfishness, it was because it forgot to love and learned to hate, it did not obey its Commander. You will see that no army can be greater than the men who make up all the various officers

and the countless privates that form its ranks. You will see that if *individuals* are jealous and selfish, if they love gold more than God and themselves better than their needy fellow men, then the army grows weak. It cannot meet the enemy and win — and so the dark pages in history had to be written. And you will see too that if the individuals, both officers and privates, were generous and true-hearted, if they loved God and their fellow men, if they were willing to sacrifice, if they were afraid of nothing on earth but their own sin, then the army grew strong, fought valiantly for right and brought happiness to the earth.

When you understand that the whole great, noble army can be only what the individual private and officer helps make it, then you will know with what great hope the church turns to you. You have united with it. Under the towers large or small, in city or country, amidst music and flowers, *you*, a girl in her teens, a boy not yet twenty, *you* have joined the noble army. You must make it great. It has hard battles to fight for God and man. You must make it strong. It needs new truth; you must find it. It needs love. It needs love enough to overcome the hate that is robbing the world of peace and good will.

You are the new church. *You* are the noble army of today. *You* must not fail the world.

Chapter II
THE FIRST RECRUITS

CHAPTER II

The First Recruits

When one decides to enlist in the noble army, become a member of the church, and help build the kingdom of God on the earth, he ought to know something about the great organization of which he will be a part. The reason why most people know so little about it, is because there is so *much* to know. It is a very long but wonderful story and every one may know a few important parts of it and as he grows older may add more, until he begins to understand how truly great the army is and what, despite its blunders, it has done for the world.

When one attends a college banquet, he loves the honor which is given to the oldest class, the few that are left who graduated fifty, sixty years ago, who have stood by the college all through the years and have made its name honored and respected.

One loves to read of the pioneers who settled on the great prairies and in the mountains in early days when life was full of danger and hardship, and one might be called upon at any moment to

battle with savages and wild beasts from the forests. One enjoys reading of the men who put up the first telegraph, the first telephone; of the men who had the faith and courage to lay the first cable; the men who first left the earth to fly about in the air. Some months ago, I saw an audience of physicians welcome an old man. The physicians were young and they had all served in the World War. The old man was also a physician. When he was young *he* had left his college and gone to war. All during that long, terrible Civil War, he served in the army. The young physicians listened with deepest respect while he told them of the difficulties of those early days without the Red Cross, without ether, with few medicines, with no well equipped field hospitals and no motor ambulances, of the desperate struggle of the physicians to help their wounded comrades live. He told them something of the work of women nurses and when he mentioned Clara Barton's name, they rose and cheered.

" Beginnings " are always interesting to earnest, intelligent young people who so often wonder how the things they see about them, came to be. You already know something about the story of the very beginnings of the Christian church when the noble army was being formed and taught and trained. You remember the little we know about

the boyhood days of Jesus Christ and how he called the first recruits to follow him and told them his plans for building the kingdom of God in the world. Just a few months ago, I stood in Palestine beside the Jordan River where Jesus asked John, the great preacher and prophet, to baptize him. I walked through the hills and over the plains where Jesus met the men, young like himself, whom he asked to come with him and help him as he went about talking of his kingdom and healing, encouraging and teaching men. As he traveled about from place to place, great crowds gathered to hear what he would say and to watch him as he made the lame walk and the blind see. They were so stirred by his words that they followed from village to village and could not bear to miss anything that he said. Travelers told each other about him and crowds gathered along the roadside or at the lake where it was rumored he would be. It was very easy to imagine them sitting on the sloping hillside where we sat, while he told them the stories that made his teaching plain. The months passed so quickly. Then a year and another. He talked a great deal about his kingdom. The people of Palestine, ruled over by the conquering Romans whom they hated, felt sure that he meant that some day he was going to furnish them with swords and spears

and lead them out to battle against their oppressors, that they should win and then the Jews would live themselves in the great palaces in Jerusalem and rule over their own people once more. But when the days and weeks passed and nothing was done and the Roman rulers passed proudly up the hill to the city, the people were disappointed. Even the twelve young men who traveled about with Jesus grew restless and asked again and again when he was going to establish his kingdom. When at last he made them see that it was not a kingdom that soon, from the hilltops of Jerusalem, should rule the people of Palestine and keep them safe from their enemies while once more they grew rich and great, they were keenly disappointed. They had hoped to be high officers in that kingdom, great and powerful. They found it very hard to be interested in this other kingdom about which he talked even more earnestly — a kingdom of the mind and heart, a kingdom not made with hands, he said, a spiritual kingdom of great power that would one day rule the whole world, a kingdom that it would take long, long centuries to establish. The things that he said about this kingdom and its power, to the vast crowds that still followed him, displeased the Jewish rulers. He taught such strange things that they thought very dangerous

— and they *were* dangerous to pride, to greed, to selfishness, to insincerity, to hate. He said that God was not only the Father of the Jewish people, as they had been taught, but also of all people everywhere. *That* they could not believe. He said that the synagogues and the temple at Jerusalem were not the only places where one could worship God. This seemed a wicked and terrible saying to the priests who, whenever they heard it, thought quickly that if the people were to *believe* it, there would be fewer worshipers in the synagogue, fewer pilgrims to the temple, fewer offerings, much less money, much less power for them. They were afraid of his teaching.

He told stories such as they had never heard before. He told them of the Prodigal Son and his father. He said that God was like that father waiting for all his prodigal children to come home to him. He said God *loved* them. He told stories of shepherds searching through hills and valleys, through the brambles of the wilderness for lost sheep until they found them. He said God was like that — he loved them. He spoke always with great sorrow and indignation of the hypocrites, of the false-hearted who did not try to be honest and pure and unselfish, but tried very hard to make people *think* they were. When the priests and the leaders heard him say these things,

they felt his disapproval of them, they felt that he knew their souls, and instead of being ashamed and repenting to the God of love about whom he told them, for the wrongs that they had done, they hated him and planned his death.

The last days came. The great feast days came. Jesus ate the Passover supper with the twelve young men whom he had taught and who, with one exception, although disappointed that he did not let the people make him king, loved him, honored him and could not leave him. At the supper, he reminded them of all he had taught them, he prayed for them and he asked that whenever they should drink the fresh, red wine and eat the bread, they would *remember* him. That was their last supper together. It is the supper the church celebrates at the communion service because Jesus asked that it be done in memory of him. Men have disagreed as to its meaning. They have persecuted one another because of their disagreement, but we like to forget their disputes and differences and think, as we take the bread and wine, that we are doing the very simple thing he asked his followers to do, remembering him. The communion has been made a very sacred service by all the prayers of nineteen hundred years and more — prayers for forgiveness, prayers of confession, prayers of gratitude

and joy, prayers for courage, prayers that promised more loyalty and greater devotion. When you share in the communion service according to the way you have been taught by your church, do not be troubled or puzzled by the mystical meaning, do not be confused by the unfamiliar words and phrases, but remember Jesus, how bravely he went from the supper to the garden of Gethsemane, remember that, after his triumph over himself in the garden where God helped him to be strong, the most glorious soul the world has ever seen, who called himself the Son of God and the Son of man, asked all those who loved him to remember him in this way. Do not forget that you belong to a noble army who, century after century, have remembered his purity, his kindness, his understanding sympathy — not one soul ever came to him whom he misunderstood; his splendid courage — he did not know the meaning of fear. Remember his teaching — that God, the Father of all the world, will forgive your sin, will help you fight it until you win. Remember how he cared for the sick, the poor, the little children; remember that he said that the greatest in his kingdom are those who *serve*. Think of all these things while the organ plays softly great hymns written in moments of gratitude and loyalty, by those who in the past have joined the noble army — " Just

as I Am," "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," "O Lord and Master of Us All," and scores of others that try to express the love and devotion of those who, with you, are members of the church.

If you can remember these things, Jesus, who called the first recruits of the noble army together and asked them to follow him in his war against sin, will not be just a wonderful person who lived long, dark centuries ago, in a little land called Palestine, but a great Person of Power who lives today, who, though unseen, is present in the universe now and is calling on you and all others in the army to lift up your heads, take courage into your hearts and go out to win the two great battles that still wait to be won. First, the battle over your own sins, the little cheatings, the petty lies and deceits, the thoughtless words, the things that only you yourself know; and, second, the battle with evil in the world, with fear, hate and selfishness that cause the pain, sorrow and suffering of men, that cause war, poverty and disease, that leave people in ignorance without education or training, that condemn little children to work in the years when they should play — all the wrong that robs God's world of happiness and joy. If you think of these things, you will go from the communion service of your church, certain that

God will help you to win *both* battles, no matter how long and hard they may be. You will go with courage and confidence and joy.

All recruits are alike in the beginning; they have to be taught and trained before they can become a strong, reliable group upon which the commander can depend. The recruits whom Jesus had called to share in his warfare, learned very slowly at first. In the moment of his great danger, they ran away. Fear overcame them. Even Peter, who boasted of his loyalty, denied that he belonged to the company. John, who truly loved him, did nothing to help him. Yet only one of the company really failed him altogether. The temptation was great and it was so easy to run away, but when the unfair trial was over, the agony of the crucifixion past and the joy of the amazing fact that their Master was not dead but still could teach, lead and command, was made known to them, the little company, ashamed of its weakness and cowardice, began to train itself. It was determined, in spite of first failures, to win, to carry out the orders of its Commander. Though they could no longer see him, they knew he was waiting for the obedience and loyalty they had promised.

As the days passed, Peter gained courage, the very courage of Christ — he feared nothing;

and John gained love — it was a love like that of Christ; and James gained wisdom — the patient, generous wisdom of Christ; and Thomas, who found it so hard to believe, went out with a great faith to help men to battle against doubt and fear. So the little group of recruits became the first division of the noble army that was to dare all things.

Let these things give you courage if, after you have joined the church, you fail to stand bravely in the presence of your comrades for those things which it expects of you. If you lose your temper, if you run away from duty, if you laugh at something unworthy of the joyous laughter of a Christian boy or girl, if you think the mean thought, do the selfish thing, yield to temptation because you are afraid, then do what they did, the *first* recruits — *remember Christ;* remember the great thing with which he has trusted you, the saving and serving of the world — you *cannot* fail; *remember* his sacred promise to help, and pray to be made strong. On your young shoulders rests the task of making the church equal to the great battles just ahead which she must win if she is to lift the world from its unbearable burden of poverty, greed and hate. *You,* the latest recruits of the noble army, will not let the church fail!

Chapter III
THE EARLY CONFLICT

CHAPTER III

The Early Conflict

After each of the great wars that have brought devastation and death to the world, all the people sorrowing over the terrible waste of life, over the thousands maimed, crippled and blinded, over all the misunderstanding and bitterness that war leaves in its track, have said to one another that there must never be another war. Yet as you study history you will see that they do not remove from men's minds and hearts the *causes* of war. War is always made first in men's minds. Ideas make war. When the dominating ideas in men's minds are wholly selfish, they will oppose all who interfere with the carrying out of those ideas. It does not take very long for that opposition to become *hate* and where there is hate, sooner or later, there will be persecution and war. Men *can* hold absolutely different ideas without hate, if those ideas are not selfish, if they do not mean that the one who holds them is determined to get what *he* wants for *himself*, regardless of what effect it may have upon the one who disagrees with him. It is because man has thought his own

particular, personal ideas always right and has not been willing to talk them over with his fellow men or to listen to their ideas, that practically every generation has seen a great war. The ideas that Jesus left with his disciples were those of peace, good will, sacrifice, service and love. These ideas were all new and men did not want them. They did not want to serve their fellow men; they wanted service from them. Jesus said *give*; they wanted to *get*. When the disciples began to preach their gospel of giving and sharing, there were bound to be multitudes who disagreed with that gospel. When they saw that such a doctrine, if accepted, would demand a great change in their way of living, they hated the new idea. It is only a step from hating an idea to hating those who believe it and teach it. That is exactly what happened to the first recruits as they went out in obedience to the command of Jesus that they teach and preach this gospel. Men hated them.

Hate and desire for revenge make war and we shall have no real universal peace until hate and revenge are overcome, until we learn to give to all other men every right we claim for ourselves, until we believe and act " do unto others as ye would that they should do to you." There it stands waiting to be tested, waiting to be *obeyed*.

As you study the days of the early conflict told

very briefly in this chapter, you will see selfishness and hate, like a crimson thread, wind in and out of the events as they pass. As you see it, say to yourselves, selfishness did this, hate brought this agony to the men; when you have said it remember that you are the noble army which must banish these *causes* of suffering from the world. But what if selfishness decide *your* action? What if hate dictate *your* words? *You* have enlisted. *You* are our hope. You *must* not yield to selfishness and hate.

You will see that many of those first recruits followed the command of Jesus and obeyed his orders without fear — they *forgot* themselves, they died in agony asking God to forgive their tormentors. They were great souls, triumphant and splendid, and those who know nothing about them have missed some of the most thrilling scenes of heroism the world has ever known.

On that great day when the eleven young men who had followed Jesus and been taught by him all the rules and the laws for building his kingdom, and the group of women who had known him and loved him, were convinced that he was victorious over death as he had told them he would be, their hearts were filled with unspeakable joy and with unbounded courage. It was on that day that the coward in Peter died; it was never seen again.

Fearless and without a thought of himself, he spoke to the great, crowding, pushing, noisy multitude about the Christ who had been crucified. Over three thousand pledged Peter that day to believe and follow the Master of whom he told them. With what wonderful, convincing power he must have spoken!

There was no place where these people and others, who as the days passed joined the rapidly growing noble army, could meet to learn more of what Jesus had taught, not a church in all the world — temples to Jehovah, temples for the gods of Greeks and Romans, but in those they could not meet to talk of Christ. They still went to service in the synagogue but they could not speak of Christ there. So they began to meet in houses, when the rooms were large enough for a group to meet together; the first churches were in the flat-roofed stone houses of Palestine. Peter spoke to them and John did. Later James spoke. Very simply they told the things that Jesus had said — "Do you remember the day when he took the children in his arms and blessed them and said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven'?" "Do you remember the day when he sat on the mountain and told of those who were blessed, truly happy — 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for

they shall see God'?" "Yes," another would add, "and I remember that he said, 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.'" So they recalled and learned many of the sayings and teachings of Jesus.

In a short time the numbers of those who loved him, promised to live as he said men should live, and asked to be baptized, became so great that the priests began to fear their power. They were sure now that people would follow this new way and in time the temples would be forsaken and no rich offerings would come into their hands. Selfishness and hate grew, and persecutions began. Stephen, a young, brilliant, courageous follower, was stoned to death outside the city gate. I have walked from the temple area along the narrow road through the gate now called by his name. I have stood near the spot where Saul, a young Pharisee, stood watching over the coats of those who stoned Stephen. What joy it was standing there and looking over to the Mount of Olives, to remember what this same Saul did when, a short time afterward, he became a follower of this Christ about whom Stephen spoke so lovingly as he died!

Not even the growing persecutions could keep men from believing when they heard the story

told by the earnest company of those who now met regularly, sang together, ate together, cared for and helped each other. When their property was taken away and many were killed, they left Jerusalem and found homes all over Palestine and in many lands far away toward the desert and the sea. Peter preached all over the Near East. John and Luke and Barnabas preached, and everywhere they organized groups of those who believed so that they might meet regularly to pray and talk and plan their work for each other. To these groups, as the months passed, the apostles wrote letters to help and encourage and teach them; these are the letters now in the New Testament, as you know.

Paul thought most about the teaching of Jesus that all men are brothers and God the Father of all. This was very hard for him to believe at first, for he had been taught that the Jews were God's chosen people and he had always thought that God cared nothing for men who were not Jews. But Paul became convinced that Jesus meant just what he had said and so he decided to become a preacher to the Gentiles or non-Jewish people. This was a difficult and dangerous task but Paul was fitted for it. He was a scholar, he spoke many languages and was a keen and brilliant thinker, and because his father, a Jew, had been

made a Roman citizen, Paul was born a *free* citizen and had more rights than other Jews.

One of the cities to which Paul went was Ephesus. It was a large and prosperous city and the center for pilgrims visiting the temples. Its people spent much time in the temples worshiping the various gods and goddesses. The Jews worshiped Jehovah in their synagogues in the narrow streets of the city. When Paul preached, great crowds came to hear him and so many people were interested, and so many said they would like to be followers of the Christ about whom he spoke, that the priests of all the temples became greatly excited. Even more angry and excited than the priests were the merchants who made gold and silver images of the gods and goddesses, who made incense and incense burners. "If the people follow this Christ about whom these men preach," said priests and merchants, "what will become of us? These Christ-followers have no temples, they have no images, they have no incense, they have no great feast days, there will be nothing to sell. This Paul says there are no gods made with hands." But each day more people came to hear and said they meant to follow this *new way*, as they called it. The priests and merchants said they would not be permitted to worship this Christ in the new, strange way.

Many disputes and arguments arose and finally a great riot which brought officers and soldiers and drove Paul and his helpers from the city. The priests and the merchants continued to persecute those who met together to learn more of Christ; they began to call them by the name which had been given them in Antioch. They said the word in tones of scorn and bitterness, "These people are not worshipers of Jupiter or Zeus or any one of the gods, not even the Jehovah of the Jews, but followers of one called Christ — *Christians.*" It was a long time before the followers of Jesus called *themselves* by that name but, starting in Antioch, it traveled from city to city and finally became the name by which all the growing army was called.

The story of the persecutions in Ephesus and like persecutions in Antioch could be repeated of practically every city to which Paul and his helpers went.

The years passed. The noble army, in spite of persecutions, grew strong. When one leader was killed or imprisoned, others took his place. Paul, while in prison, spent all his time writing letters. He wrote to the Ephesians, he wrote to the churches at Philippi, at Corinth and in Thessalonica — messages reminding them of how sincere and great they must be, that the new faith might be kept pure and true to what Christ taught.

What he said in these letters you have studied many times in the books of the New Testament.

At last, after persecutions and beatings, sickness, shipwreck and imprisonment, Paul found himself in *Rome*, the very center of the whole known world. What a wonderful city it must have been in those days, for it is wonderful even now after hundreds of years have passed. When you stand, as many of you will some day, in the Coliseum or travel over the old Roman road, see the ruins of the old palaces, visit the catacombs and walk about the seven hills, you will find it easy to imagine what an impressive place it must have been when it was the ruling city of the world and its word meant life or death to countless thousands. It is no wonder that Paul was thrilled over the opportunity to tell the story of Jesus Christ to these proud, haughty, conquering Romans who despised all other men and made them their servants and slaves, even though he must stand before them a prisoner in chains.

Not long after Paul had his opportunity to preach about Christ and his call to men to choose God for their Father and to make all men their brothers, there was a very bitter persecution all over Europe, and during this time Paul probably met his death, with a host of other Christians.

The years hurried past and there came a day

when all the men who had known Jesus so well, who had traveled about Palestine with him, shared that last supper in Jerusalem, heard him speak and teach, were dead. Peter had been crucified, John was dead, Thomas, James, all were gone. The letters they had written were scattered about through the various Christian companies in Europe and Asia. But the church was growing. It had special meeting-places outside the homes. The girls and women who learned the sayings of Jesus and his prayer, taught the children. They took part in the services, they helped care for the sick, the poor and the widows. All the church was being organized and the leading men became elders, bishops, presbyters, officers of different names, who should help in the work of the church and aid the Christians who were sick or poor and the churches that were small or weak. Always the Christians were in danger of persecution, for they could not worship the old, pagan gods or have their images in their homes, and so they were accused of atheism and put to death, or because they must worship only God and could not burn incense before the emperor's statue, they were accused of treason, and for this also they could be put to death.

Among the bishops who had been given charge of the work of the growing church, one of the

greatest was Polycarp. He had become a Christian when he was a very young boy and his life had been a wonderful example to all Christians. He was the Bishop of Smyrna, a large and prosperous city. A series of terrible earthquakes almost destroyed the city and the suffering was great. The people of that day knew nothing of the reason for earthquakes, they knew nothing of the great changes that were taking place in the earth's surface and they thought the gods were displeased over something and sent the earthquakes as a punishment. They tried to think of something that might have been done in Smyrna to displease the gods and some one suggested the *Christians* who refused to worship all pagan gods. The non-Christian Jews who hated them agreed, and terrible persecutions followed. At first, the Christians were able to hide their beloved, kindly old bishop but he was finally discovered and the crowd cried, " Put him to death." The governor tried to save him. " You are an old man," he said; " what difference will it make if you burn incense to Cæsar or give an offering to the gods? Bow down, old man, curse your Christ and live." But a young voice from the crowd called out, " Be brave, Polycarp, and play the man! " There was no need to challenge him. Polycarp was speaking. " Eighty and six years have I served Christ and

he has never wronged me. How could I speak evil of my King and Saviour!" He walked bravely to the fire built in the amphitheatre and died. Many people, seeing the splendid courage of the old man and the look of triumph on his brave face, joined the noble army and became members of that early church despite the fact that it always meant danger and often death to be called Christian.

So the days of the early conflict between the old idea of many gods who must be pleased lest they destroy men, and the new idea of a God of love and understanding who wanted, more than anything else, to save men, passed. The noble army proved its courage and its faith and grew in strength and influence. Many people of wealth joined it, spending their money for the good of all; some people of learning and culture joined it and studied earnestly, trying to understand the kingdom that Jesus wanted to set up on the earth. Many of them did understand and their lives were so beautiful, so full of courage and joy that others, seeing them, asked to be taught this new religion that made Christians so different from their non-Christian neighbors. It was the lives of these followers of Christ in the early conflict that made the noble army grow. That will make it grow now. That is why the church looks to you with

such hope. You will help by your clean, sincere, honest, happy lives to make others want to join the noble army, to strengthen it as it fights against sin. You are young, and wrong thinking is easy to change when one is young. You can learn to think of all the youth of all the world in the spirit of love and service, and thoughts make ideas, and ideas, as you saw at the beginning of the chapter, rule the world. The unhappy world of your day needs new ideas. Because you are young you have the courage to carry out orders that make older men and women, even the best of them, say, "*It can't be done.*" The whole world is hoping that the time has come when the great principles taught so faithfully by the early disciples will be tested and tried in homes, communities, schools, churches and nations. Perhaps you are the ones who will *really try* the Golden Rule. It alone can save the governments of men.

In the days of the early conflict, the noble army — men and boys, girls and women — or, as the old hymn says, "the matron and the maid" — believed that the commands that Jesus gave, no matter how difficult they seemed, were meant to be carried out. They tried — forgetting themselves, fearing nothing. They fought bravely against sin in their own lives and in the church. It may be that some morning when you hear the

people singing those great words of challenge — "Who follows in their train?" that hundreds of you will say, "We do!" It will be a great day of hope for a world, at this moment almost overcome by selfishness and hate!

Chapter IV
MARCHING ON

CHAPTER IV

Marching On

Despite the fact that the noble army, men and boys, women and girls, recruited in Palestine and sent out all over the world to win new members, stood constantly face to face with danger, persecution and death, it had, as we have seen, made progress. It was only one hundred and fifty-five years old when Polycarp gave up his life rather than deny Jesus Christ to whom he had pledged his loyalty. Although some of the members clung to pagan customs and failed to live up to the high ideals that had been taught them, yet the great majority of those called Christian lived in such a way that they stood out in marked contrast to all the rest of the world. In a day when barbaric cruelty ruled the sports and games which were practically the only forms of amusement, they refused to attend the gladiator shows. If all men were brothers they could not see some killed by ferocious wild beasts for the amusement of the rest. In a day when all men who could afford it owned slaves, they began to set theirs free and they treated the slaves of others with respect as

human beings, as what Christ said they were — brother men. In a day when labor with the hands was despised and performed only by slaves or the very poor and degraded, they honored it. Rich and poor, the Christian laborer breaking stones for road building and the Christian owner of the palace beside the road, were *friends*. The Christian laborer had his tools carved upon his tombstone as a mark of honor. Such a thing never had been known before — but was not the Leader of the army a carpenter? The apostles worked with their hands and taught the dignity and honor of self-support. Wherever a band of Christians lived, the poor were helped, the sick were cared for, little children were protected. Non-Christian men were astonished as they saw the purity and strength of their lives. "They seem to love even their enemies," said one rich young prince as he sought them out to learn the secret of such victorious living.

So, strong in spirit as well as in numbers, the army was making progress in the fight against selfishness and hate. Sometimes the emperors of Rome were friendly and interested and then great numbers joined the Christians, but when a ruler at Rome withdrew his favor and persecutions arose, these often forsook the noble army and went back to their pagan gods, leaving the truly faith-

ful to carry on the fight. These smaller groups, Christian both in word and deed, read the Old Testament rolls, listened to the letters of the apostles, sang hymns their members had written, and taught their children the stories of Christ. When Trajan became emperor, because of the many uprisings and plots against the government, he ordered that no evening meetings of any groups whatever should be held. So the Christians were obliged to hold their weekly service in the morning and the communion, which had been celebrated at the time when Jesus and his disciples had eaten it in Jerusalem, was also changed to the morning hour, and now only members of the Christian church were permitted to join in it. As the years passed, these and other changes took place in Christian worship. There were questions and discussions about Christ and some groups talked so much as to just what they should *believe* about him and tried so hard to *explain* him that they forgot what he asked them to *do*.

Some of the Christian groups could not forget the glorious feast days of the pagan temples which they had once enjoyed — the music, the dancing, the processions, the offerings, the holidays — and the plain, simple worship of the Christian church did not satisfy them. So, little by little, all sorts of forms and ceremonies crept in. Those who were

to be baptized kept an all-night vigil in the church, sometimes the mark of the cross was placed on their foreheads, sometimes after baptism they were dressed in white robes to symbolize their new life but, as a matter of fact, their *living* grew more careless, less pure. Already Peter, John and Paul would have been greatly astonished could they have come into some of the morning services of the Christian church. But still greater changes were about to take place. These changes seem to come suddenly but as one studies history he finds that no change comes suddenly. Sometimes the events of fifty years have been preparing for the moment in which some great event seems to *happen.*

The church had never been wholly free from bitter persecution but after the year three hundred eleven, there came forty years of freedom. The people rebuilt the destroyed churches and rewrote the stories of Christ's life and words. The dying emperor prepared a statement declaring tolerance for the church and asked the Christians to pray for him. Constantine, the new emperor, had been with him when he ordered persecutions to cease and when he came to the throne, although he had not declared himself a Christian, the church felt that it was safe. Then came the great battle with a rival emperor and in the night Constantine

had a vision. He seemed to see a shining cross in the sky and over it the words, " By This I Conquer." In a dream that followed, Christ appeared and told him to make a new standard bearing the cross. So the cross was put upon the banner of the Emperor of Rome and was stamped upon the shields of his soldiers! Constantine was victorious and declared himself a Christian.

The church that began in a house in Jerusalem, with the small group who had known and loved Christ, had come through poverty, danger and persecution to the throne of the imperial city of Rome and something of its spirit found its way into the laws of the great empire. Crucifixion as a punishment was forbidden and the cross upon which criminals had always been put to death became a sacred and holy thing — because upon a cross Jesus Christ had died. Gladiatorial games were forbidden, the rich were encouraged to follow the early Christians' example, set their slaves free and pay them wages, and laws were made giving more justice to the poor. Yet Constantine in his own life, though having so many virtues not common in the rulers of empires, was not simple, sincere and Christlike, and as you study your history in school, you will see that many crimes of fear, selfishness and hate are recorded in the story of his life.

None of the noble army, when it was free and victorious, ever thought of persecuting the pagan people about them. They tried to teach, preach and live so that those who knew them would want to be Christians. They knew what it meant to be persecuted; they did not persecute. But after the death of Constantine — when the noble army, grown great and powerful, had lost much of its purity and nobility — they forgot its real mission, forgot that Jesus said the two great commands were, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"; "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; forgot what James had taught about true religion — "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." So the noble army itself, *the Christians*, began to destroy temples, take away property, imprison and torture the pagan worshipers until only in Rome did the non-Christian still dare to offer incense and celebrate his feast days. Large numbers of the pagan world, unwilling to suffer for their faith, became Christian without any real change in their hearts, no warm love for Christ, no willingness to suffer hardship — they could not make good soldiers for any army. Some of them were selfish, ambitious men of the court, who sought for power. This

made a great change in the church and, more and more, feast days and fast days, processions and ceremonies took the place of earnest prayer and valiant endeavor to live pure, true lives, to make the world better, happier and more like the kingdom of God that Christ said he came to build. Though many kept the faith, the noble army of the church found within itself a new and deadly enemy to fight. Still a great company marched steadily onward and made some progress in the task of making the world, not Christian in *name* but in fact, Christian — like Christ.

The story of the next few hundred years is a long one but filled with so many thrilling scenes that as you study it in history and literature, in school and college, you will be fascinated by it.

There was the great council held at Nicæa and attended by bishops, deacons, presbyters and churchmen from every part of the Christian world, wearing the rich robes and costumes of the various countries. There were great debates, exciting disputes, between the three parties who went to the council. They tried to put into words some of the things about Christ that they had come to believe. All could not agree as to what they believed and those who really did agree in thought, were unwilling to agree in words. At

last enough came to an agreement to carry the vote for a statement known as the Nicene Creed. Arius and two of the Egyptian bishops could not agree to this statement and to make peace in the Council they were banished by the emperor. That was a sad day for the church when it allowed an emperor to banish some of its members because of some things which they honestly believed. Again they followed the example of the unchristian world which so long before had banished John to the island of Patmos. If the noble army had dreamed what trouble this act, which served as an example in the years to come, would bring to the church, they could never have done it.

In spite of the vote, most churches preferred the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed was not generally accepted until a second council held in three hundred eighty-one, when it was permanently adopted. It is the great historic creed of the church.

And now changes were very rapid. Emperors came and went in quick succession. Three times Alaric, the Goth, came to the gates of Rome. The first time, large sums of money sent him away; the second time he was allowed to choose the emperor who should sit upon the throne; but the third time, the city was pillaged, plundered and much of it destroyed. These tribes from the

North under Alaric, were Christian, so the churches were spared. The pagan temples were completely destroyed or consecrated and made into Christian churches. In this time of terrible suffering and war, when the old government was destroyed, people turned to the church for leadership and defence and the Roman bishop became a very great power.

A whole generation passed and Attila, the Hun, came to the gates of Rome. This time, Leo the first, the head of the church, went out to meet him, gave him a large ransom and sent him away. The city was saved and no one objected when, after this, Leo announced that he and his associates would decide all important questions for the church of the West. Up to this time, all the bishops of the western church were known to the people as Pope (meaning papa) but now it became the title of the Bishop of Rome alone. This was the beginning of the great power that the church of Rome was one day to have over all the Christian world.

These were days when the noble army again and again lost sight of Christ. Only here and there did men long for the pure, strong challenge of his commands, the joy of service in his name. These prayed that the church might return to the simple faith of the early days. St. Augustine

was one of them. Hating the terrible sins in his own life and in the life about him, suffering from great remorse, he went to the desert to try to live there a simple, Christian life of repentance, prayer and service. Jerome and Chrysostom tried to call men back to the ways of the first recruits, to help the church forget itself, banish all desire for great wealth and great worldly power and become what Jesus asked his followers to be — servants, living as he did, not to be ministered to but to minister. Others who felt the same way gradually joined them and taking vows of poverty and purity, they lived together in monasteries. But alas, the day came when they themselves forgot the kind of kingdom Christ came to build and also sought riches and power.

Sorrow and suffering again overtook the world when the Huns, determined to destroy Christian civilization, sent their armies out into every part of Europe. They called themselves the " Dread of the World " and the rest of the world called them the " Scourge of God." If we should follow their progress over Europe and picture truly the scenes of horror, we should not be able to look at them even in imagination.

Then came the great day when the Romans and the Goths, fighting together that the Christian nations need not be utterly destroyed, won a great

victory at Chalons and the civilized world was saved once more.

While the soldiers fought with the Huns, the church struggled with all sorts of doctrines and beliefs and tried to put into words the puzzling conclusions reached by scholars and bishops, monks and Pope, about God, about Christ, the communion, baptism, sin and salvation, heaven and hell. When they succeeded in putting what they believed into words, the statement was accepted for awhile by the majority and all who refused to accept it were called heretics. Sometimes they were punished, more often banished from the church.

If I were to copy most of these statements for you on this page, you would not understand them even though they were written in English. The words are so difficult, you would find it hard to pronounce them. There are some noble, simple, glorious statements of faith and love but most were not understood by any but the scholars and the clergy. How far, far from Christ's beautiful Sermon on the Mount and his words of sympathy, pardon and love they were! Yet they helped to bring some sort of unity into the church in a day when war made travel and intercourse very difficult and led men to think about what they believed before they joined the church and promised to support it.

In the East, the church was growing very weak. Justinian, who rebuilt the famous and beautiful St. Sofia at Constantinople, had been very intolerant and had *compelled* the pagans to be baptized and join the Christian church. People made members of the church in this way, never became loyal, faithful followers of Christ, showing in their *lives* what being a Christian really means. They followed the orders of whatever person happened to be in power without real sacrifice or deep devotion.

During all these troubled years, the church, through its missionary work, was marching on. As Paul, by his difficult journeys, brought the gospel to Europe, monks and missionaries took it to Africa, banished bishops and churchmen took it to Persia. This was the period when our pagan ancestors, Celt, Scot and Pict, had the gospel story told to them.

You will study in your school history, if you have not already done so, the entire story of Pope Gregory's work — how he became the central power for all the churches of Europe, how he established a court of appeal for all the church, how he sent spiritual advisers to the princes, how he organized work for the poor, how unceasingly he urged that all the people of all the world be made Christian. Although, later, the church at

Rome abused all these privileges of leadership and used its power only for itself, at this time it kept the churches in touch with each other and brought back the desire of the first recruits to preach the gospel to every creature.

While the people of Europe were facing the terrible hardships of war with real courage and the church, despite its many blunders, was making some progress, a little boy was born in the city of Mecca who, when he grew to manhood, proclaimed himself the prophet of the One God and preached against idolatry and evil. No one in the great western empire dreamed what a part he was to play in their future history. His name was Mohammed and his rapid rise to great power reads like a fairy tale. People listened eagerly to his sermons and talks and later, with the rules for living which he preached, they wrote the Koran, the Bible of his followers who were called Mohammedans after his name. When he was persecuted for his teachings, he fled to Medina and thousands followed him. They were willing to fight for him. They did not teach. They compelled people to become Mohammedans or die by the sword.

When Mohammed died in six hundred thirty-three, practically all Arabians were his declared followers. Then Syria, Egypt and Persia and parts of Palestine became Mohammedan and his

successors ruled over a great empire which they determined to make even greater. For a time it seemed as if nothing could stop them as they swept over north Africa with their mighty sword and the cry, "Mohammed or death!" They went to Spain and crossed the Pyrenees to the south of France. On the eastern border of Europe they pressed on toward Constantinople. It seemed as though Christianity were doomed now to certain defeat.

It was then, in that dark moment, that the Christian church stood together and in one of the greatest battles of history on the field at Tours, the Mohammedan army was overcome and the Christian Empire saved. Had it met defeat, how different the history of the world would have been!

How easy it seems for us to join the church today! To become one of the noble army means neither suffering, imprisonment, danger nor death. It is hard for us to realize, when as we study it, the onward march seems very slow, how many enemies there were who pressed upon it — pagan, Hun, Mohammedan in turn; how many enemies *within* it had to fight — superstition, ignorance, love of self, love of sin, desire for power, that threatened to destroy its purity and the strength which comes from righteousness. Yet tramp — tramp — tramp, step by step, it made its way through the world. When one company grew

weak, some other company turning back to Christ became loyal, pure-hearted and true and again held the standard high. Now it is in your hands. You have become the church, you are the great new company in the noble army. Do you march to victory? What do *you* want to win?

How earnestly we pray as we look at you — the *young* church, the hope of the Christian faith — that it is the kingdom you are determined to win, the kingdom of God, a world comforted by mercy and love, set free by justice and brotherhood!

Despite the powerful enemies of our day, we know that under your leadership the church will keep steadily on.

"New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key."

You will keep the noble army marching on — nearer to God.

Chapter V
MEETING DEFEAT

CHAPTER V

Meeting Defeat

One thousand years! It is a long time. But since those days when the first recruits of the noble army started out into the world with their message of good will to men, ten centuries have passed. When Peter preached his great sermon there was no church — in the year one thousand the story of the church had become the history of the world. When the ruler in those first days of Paul's preaching cried out, " These who turn the world upside down have come here also," his hearers did not dream that he spoke the very truth. Europe was Christian now, at least in name. On Christmas day, in the year eight hundred, Charlemagne, the king of the Franks, had been crowned emperor of the Romans and his empire called the Holy Roman Empire. The Pope had crowned him and Charlemagne called himself Defender of the Church. So the Holy Catholic Church, as it was now called, with the Pope of Rome at its head, went side by side with the emperor as he conquered his enemies. Wherever his warfare brought victory, there the

church, the school and the monastery were started. All these churches declared their loyalty to Rome. He made the giving of money, gifts and offerings compulsory and this enriched the treasury of Rome.

During the thousand years, a great many new customs, as we have seen, crept into the church, both in Constantinople and Rome. After much discussion, sacred pictures had been hung in the church at Constantinople and candles and incense were burned before them just as they were once burned before the many gods of the pagan world. Images followed, images of the apostles, the great leaders of the church, images of Christ. The worship of the saints and of Mary the mother of Jesus began, and the people confessed their sins to the priests. There were many disputes and discussions about these things. Sometimes a ruler forbade their use and images and pictures were removed. Other rulers put them back and at last they were accepted by the majority of the church. There were those in the noble army who felt very deeply that all this was wrong. They declared it was almost as bad as pagan worship. They felt that in this return to the worship of things that could be seen with the eye, the church would soon forget that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and

in truth." They feared that kneeling before a picture to pray might lead the people away from the simple, earnest prayer Jesus taught his disciples, from his way of speaking to God in the fields, in the mountains, by the lake, with no candle, image or priest. That there was reason for their fears, the later story of the church showed. Large numbers of Christians began to believe that a miracle took place whenever the bread and wine were given at the communion service, that they were changed in some mysterious way into the body and blood of Christ. Those who could not believe in this doctrine which was called by a long, hard name which you who study Latin will understand — transubstantiation — tried to teach that the bread and wine were symbols of a great spiritual experience, but they were outnumbered and the church taught that those who did not believe in this mystical change were heretics; many times they were dismissed from membership, excommunicated.

It was the teaching of these mysteries and the belief in superstitions enough to fill many books that created the enemy within the church that threatened to destroy the noble army. The multitude of ceremonies left little time or thought for the humble, brave, pure-hearted, courageous Christ who had taught his disciples so great a gospel.

One by one the old type leaders of the church died and a new sort of pope presided over the church at Rome. Many of them were most unworthy men who won their position because of influence and power. The monasteries forgot their vows of poverty and service and began to live like all the world. Now and then a pure-hearted, earnest, simple lover of Christ would try to pull the church back to the old days of righteousness; good monks tried to persuade their brothers to return to the old life of sacrifice and prayer but only here and there did they meet with success. The life of Rome grew so wicked that men said, "The morals of Rome are the horror of the world." People had the opportunity to see what life would be without real religion.

It was during these days that many places connected with the life of Christ and the apostles became holy shrines to which pilgrims from all over the world went to worship, hoping that in this way their sins might be forgiven. Many, overcome by the thought of their sin, no longer remembering or never having been told what Christ taught about forgiveness, punished themselves for the evil things that troubled their consciences. They called this doing penance. Sometimes the penance was cruel and caused great suffering. One devoted man learned and recited

forty psalms and, at the close of the recital of each psalm, scourged himself with one hundred lashes upon his bare back. One can hardly read today of the penances by which even the girls and women tried to feel pardon for sin. How far from Christ they were! How little they understood him who said to the woman who sinned so deeply, " Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more !" There was no one to remind them of the simple words of Jesus, no one to remind them that Jesus said, " Come unto me . . . I will give you rest." So they came, offering jewels, rich tapestries, gold, land, to the church, that they might be assured of forgiveness.

By the year one thousand, the morning service of the church had become very elaborate. There were long recitals of prayers in Latin and responses were given by the people. Organs were used in the churches, masses were said for the sick and for the dead.

Many people thought the end of the world was near and traveled to Jerusalem where they believed Jesus might any day come back to earth. Trouble between the churches of the East under the authority of Constantinople and churches of the West under the Pope continued until soon after the thousand years had passed, they were completely divided with the Patriarch at Constantinople

the head of the church of the East and the Pope at Rome as the head of the church of the West.

When Hildebrand became Pope, he tried to free the church from the power of the emperor and the court. He wanted to make it greater, thinking that if it gained supreme power, it could command the world, compel it to repent of its sin and do right. Most of you know the story of how Hildebrand proved the power of the church for a time by making King Henry IV stand three days in the snow, clad only in thin robes of sackcloth, that he might receive forgiveness from the Pope and keep his kingdom. Though Hildebrand himself was later sent into exile, the thing that he had done to the king to show the authority of the church was remembered and later popes tried to follow his example.

But though the church seemed so powerful, we remember that it was not making people good or bringing justice and happiness to the world. Religion no longer meant to the majority what it meant to the early Christians who did their work faithfully, preached the gospel, loved one another, made life very simple and very happy and when the challenge came, died for their faith with great courage. Even St. Bernard, who was unselfish and pure-hearted and longed to make the church

powerful only that it might serve better, was not able to save it from defeat.

For a time, the Crusaders, leaving home with the high purpose of rescuing the holy places of Palestine from the Mohammedans and saving the pilgrims to holy places from the tortures of the Turks, stirred men's souls and made them think of Christ whom they had almost forgotten. But even the Crusaders were used by the Pope and clergy to gain more power. The Holy Land was not won, countless crusaders never came back and their property went to the church. It became exceedingly rich and its riches and love of ease blotted out the memory of its great mission to the world. It taught fear, not love, and the noble army lost its joy. When religion does not give freedom and joy, it is not the religion that Jesus came to give to the world. So true religion was, for a time, defeated, and fear, selfishness, greed and hate ruled over men's hearts.

Struggling slowly back from the Crusades, officers and soldiers, kings and slaves, met the people of other lands, talked with them and *began to think.* When men begin to think, they are no longer defeated. The noble army, in the midst of its defeat, was saved by those who began to think for themselves, who thought they had discovered *truth* and were willing to die for it. They

thought over the words of the Pope who said he was "below God, above man; Judge of all, judged by none." They did not believe it was true. They refused to accept longer any of the superstitions and confusing doctrines. They wanted to know more than anything else in the world what Jesus had said. When the members of the noble army want to know *that*, the army can be saved. They wanted to know also what James, John, Peter and the other disciples had taught, but they could not go to the Bible to see. There was no book of the Old and New Testament lying on a convenient table. Beautiful copies of the Scriptures, written on vellum and exquisitely illuminated, were owned by the church. But they could not be read, for not one was written in the spoken language or dialect of the men who wanted to read it.

One of those who wanted to know the truth was a very wealthy merchant named Waldo. One day he went to the priest in the cathedral at Lyons. "Which is the surest way to heaven?" he asked. The priest answered, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell whatever thou hast, give to the poor, and thou shalt find treasure in heaven." Waldo provided for the care of his wife and daughters, then sold all that he had. He wanted to read the Gospels for himself so, out of a part of his

money, he paid two scholars to translate them and other parts of the New Testament into his own language. He read and reread the story of Christ's simple life and he read too the command, "Go preach the gospel to every creature." He saw that the church was not preaching it. So he formed a society called "The Poor Men of Lyons." They dressed in coarse clothing and wore wooden shoes. They read the Scriptures, they preached on the streets, they served the poor and the sick and tried to live as nearly like Christ as they could. The people followed them as they used to follow Jesus and they believed in what they heard as eagerly as the people of olden days had believed in the message of Peter, John and Paul.

When the church heard of these things, it said that such preaching and teaching must stop; that no one but those appointed and trained by the church would be permitted to read the Scriptures or teach the people. That command, given by the Pope, proved a great mistake on the part of the church, for "The Poor Men" did not stop. They were persecuted and imprisoned and their followers, like those of the early apostles, were obliged to flee to far countries. Everywhere they went, they preached the new doctrine of a faith that would prove its sincerity by deeds of kindness and love, by lives of strength and purity and of a

church as simple as that of the early apostles. They called themselves Waldensians in honor of the merchant preacher, Waldo, and in spite of the bitter persecution, they grew in numbers and in spiritual power. As late as sixteen hundred eighty-six, a terrible massacre of these simple, loyal, earnest Christians took place and over six thousand met their death, but what they had taught still lived and their purifying influence helped save the noble army.

Assuming more and more authority over princes and kings, the church continued its life of ease and pleasure, not realizing that it was losing its soul. It might have been said of the church of that day as it was to one of an older day, " Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

It was about this time that the Mendicant Orders of Friars were formed. Francis of Assisi was the leader of one order and Dominic, an earnest young Spaniard, the leader of another. These young men both believed that the church was not following Christ and that it must go back to him. St. Francis founded the Gray Friars, called so because of their gray robes, and Dominic founded the Black Friars. They went about

teaching, from village to village, and preaching the gospel to the poor. They did countless deeds of love and mercy and lived pure, noble lives. Because of its experience with the Waldensians, the church did not command these men to cease their preaching but led them to take vows and connected their orders closely with itself. St. Francis was one of the most beautiful and unselfish men of the church. But after Francis and Dominic were dead, these orders of Friars grew rich and powerful, ceased to live as they had been taught and lost their great passion to save and serve the world.

The hunger to know the truth about Christ, about what he taught and how he meant his followers to live, could be found everywhere throughout the church. Earnest, sincere people who tried to obey in their own lives all his known commands, continued to save the church from absolute defeat. Scholars all over Europe became interested again in the doctrines of the church. One of the greatest of these was Thomas Aquinas. There was no problem of doctrine he was not eager to discuss and about every puzzling question he earnestly prayed. He was a real help to the noble army because he too made it *think* and have reasons for what it said it believed. He longed to help it escape from the superstitions that were

keeping it from going back to the early Christian faith. If it had followed him, it might have been saved some of the darkest pages in its history, for the great catholic (which you remember, in the beginning, meant universal) church was doomed to be divided and broken. Its greatest enemy was *itself*, its own ambition, its love of luxury, wealth and power, the unwillingness of its leaders to follow the simple faith taught by Jesus Christ in Palestine. There came a day when defeat met the heads of the church and the Pope and papal court were sent into exile. A French pope sat in the great church at Rome, obedient to King Philip. Page after page of the story of the church of that period is a record of criticism, persecution and hate. The popes are banished and return, they gain power and lose it, buy it and sell it and the saving faith in the simple Christ of the Gospels was lost to thousands who could no longer trust the church yet knew nowhere else to go. The church service had become a dead thing of form and ceremony. Even the best thinkers were confused and puzzled, while many confessed their doubt of all things. They were like the troubled souls in Richard Watson Gilder's poem —

" Thou Christ, my soul is hurt and bruised!
With words the scholars wear me out;
My brain o'erwearied and confused,
Thee, and myself, and all I doubt.

. . . . . .

" And must I back to darkness go
Because I cannot say their creed?
I know not what I think; I know
Only that thou art what I need."

Everywhere, men and women were saying in many different ways, " Thou art what I need." Everywhere they were searching for this Christ whom they could not find because the church taught about *itself* and not about him.

But though the great army itself had met with defeat, within it were strong, brave, pure hearts—men and boys, the matron and the maid, who were coming to its rescue, who were to bring it new life and power and send it out again, as you will see, to battle against sin, to change its defeat to victory.

Chapter VI
THE UNDAUNTED

CHAPTER VI

The Undaunted

Men have always been great and small, good and bad, quite as they are today. One never looks at man at his worst without finding, in contrast, man at his very best. In one selfishness rules, in another sacrifice rules, in one hatred, in another love. Man at his worst makes one blush for humanity but man at his best is fine and noble, worthy the respect and high honor of his fellows. History never yet has recorded a period so dark that great souls did not rise above its darkness and bring it light. Their names are on an honor roll at which the world looks with pride. Undismayed by the strength of the enemy or the seeming impossibility of the task, they dare attempt anything that promises relief for their burdened fellow men. They are the *undaunted.* They are like St. Paul. You will remember that once he reminded the people of Corinth, when they were losing courage, of the way in which he had himself faced apparent disaster and defeat. "Thrice was I beaten with rods," he says, "once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night

and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." But none of these things moved him; his dauntless spirit triumphed.

As the centuries passed, the list of those who, in moments of peril, saved the faith of the noble army, grew so long that we can do little more than mention a few about whom every young recruit should know. Whole books have been written about many of them. When you want to read a thrilling tale of courage, adventure and triumph, go to your library and get the story of the life of some one of these great heroes in the struggle for justice, freedom and true religion.

One of the first names in the honor list is John Wycliffe, born near Yorkshire in England about thirteen hundred twenty-four. He graduated from Oxford and became a brilliant young teacher of theology and the Bible. He was appointed a member of the court and was one of the commis-

sioners of the king. The Pope and church at Rome were not pleased with his new doctrines nor were many of their followers in England, but because he had such powerful friends, those who condemned his teachings were not able to kill him although they finally succeeded in taking away his position as instructor in the college.

Young Wycliffe had become convinced, through his earnest study of the Scriptures, of several things which he succeeded in leading great numbers of people in England and many all over Europe, to believe with him. He taught that the Scriptures were the only law of the church. He said that these writings demanded pure, honest, unselfish living and that *lives* of Christians were the things by which the church must be tested. He said that the church had no right to strive for power, for great riches or for authority in governing men and nations. He declared that the leaders of the church should be humble followers of Christ, going about doing good, caring for rich and poor, helping men to conquer themselves and their sins. He reminded them of that saying of Christ, repeated by him so often, " The greatest in my kingdom is the servant of all."

Wycliffe organized groups of men as St. Francis had done and taught them to preach. He sent

them out two by two as Jesus had sent out groups of his followers. They wore long, coarse robes and each carried a staff in his hand as the Franciscans had done. But, like the Waldensians, they took no vows. Great crowds listened eagerly to their preaching but, more than that, they began to reform their lives.

Wycliffe soon determined that the people should have the Bible in their own hands, translated into English, that any one who could read might see for himself just what it said. So with others to help him, he set to work upon his great task. A friend translated the Old Testament and Wycliffe probably translated the New Testament. No one can measure the effect this had upon the people. Great numbers of the New Testaments were sold; the poor learned to read so that they might read the Bible. Sometimes one person read to a whole company in a little village by the sea or in the hills. Often he read some favorite story or chapter so many times that his hearers could repeat it and teach it to their children.

All this was most displeasing to Rome. They said Wycliffe was "casting pearls before swine." But the Pope and the clergy had to content themselves with words of condemnation. The friends in England protected Wycliffe. Thirty years after his death, his body was taken from its burial-

place, burned and the ashes, with words of hate and scorn, thrown into the River Swift that carried them to the sea. People who read his Bible were punished and the books burned. In spite of this, about one hundred fifty copies are in existence *today* and John Wycliffe's name remains upon the list of the undaunted. He won the respect of all the world for his brilliant scholarship. He was a great patriot to whom threats of death meant nothing and he was a true follower of the simple gospel he preached.

John Huss is another name upon the honor list of the undaunted. His parents were peasants of Bohemia who determined to educate their son and train him for the church. He graduated at Prague and, like Wycliffe, became a teacher in his own university. Later he was ordained a priest, still keeping his position as teacher. He studied Wycliffe's doctrines very earnestly and was convinced that what he taught was true. When he became a preacher in Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, he preached in the Bohemian language instead of conducting the service in Latin, so that all the people understood his sermons. He preached very fiery sermons. He criticized the Pope, the church, the monks and all who failed to preach and teach the gospel in the simple fashion by which it was given to the world through the apostles.

For these things he was excommunicated and compelled to leave Prague.

When the great Council of Constance met, John Huss was commanded to appear before it. His friends, fearing for his safety, urged him not to obey, but he thought it was his duty to go and speak bravely for the truth as the early apostles did. He hoped he could persuade some of the Council to believe with him. But almost as soon as he arrived in Constance, he was imprisoned, a little later condemned and burned at the stake. He endured his sufferings with great courage, declaring his willingness to die as did the apostles for his faith in Christ and his gospel. Young men, standing in the crowd watching as Paul had watched Stephen, marvelled at his courage, at his words of love and forgiveness instead of hate, and many accepted his faith and went out all over Bohemia preaching it.

One of those who earnestly studied the gospel as John Huss taught it was a young Dominican monk who preached in Florence. Although he never left the Roman church, he paid the dreadful penalty which the church demanded for preaching against it. So powerful was his preaching that the people burned their evil books in the square, hundreds gave up their extravagant lives and spent their time in deeds of love and mercy.

But the Pope, whose wicked life he had criticized, hated him and commanded that he be punished. He was bribed by offers of high position in the church to give up preaching his sermons of condemnation but refused. "Your sins," he said to the leaders of the church, "have made me a prophet." False reports of a confession which it was said he had made under terrible agony, led many of his friends to forsake him and after being most cruelly tortured, he was hanged and his body burned. It is almost impossible for us to understand how these things could be done in the name of the Christian church. But, like that of John Huss, Savonarola's death only meant more converts to the faith he preached. The Roman church itself later repented of what it had done to Savonarola and Raphael was ordered to place his likeness in the famous fresco at Florence.

The great Italian Renaissance about which you have studied in school was nearing its close, the church still struggling for power, still loving wealth, ease and luxury. In England, the church had freed itself of much of the power of Rome, as had Spain, but the rest of the Western churches of Europe were still loyal to it.

Printing was invented. Three little words! But they changed the history of the world. Hun-

dreds of copies of any part of the Bible could now be made for the cost of one of the copies made so carefully by hand — for to copy by hand the book of John or the book of Romans took a long time and would not be a task that any of us would welcome. As the art of printing became known, the New Testament was printed in French, later the whole Bible. Parts of it were printed in Spanish and two versions in Italian. The Netherlands and Bohemia had printed editions. People everywhere were reading the book but as yet the great majority did not *think* as they read. They believed that the words which they found hard to understand must mean just what the church taught. The great majority of the Christian world, led by the church at Rome, as we have seen, worshiped Mary, the mother of Jesus, and confessed their sins to the priest, not daring to ask God for forgiveness; they still thought of Christ as a strict, harsh judge whose forgiveness and favor would come through penance, offerings, rich gifts to the church and difficult pilgrimages to holy places. Yet great changes had been made by the Renaissance, as you know, changes in knowledge, in art, in literature and in the power of the scholars to think for themselves. But far greater changes than those of the Renaissance were to come. A new name which every church of the Protestant

world will always remember was to be written upon the honor list of the undaunted.

In fourteen hundred eighty-three, just nine years before Columbus discovered America, a boy was born in the simple, peasant home of a German miner. His parents had great ambitions for their little son and, though poor, were determined to educate him and fit him to be a lawyer. His name was Martin Luther, the name that was to change the history of religion, for Martin did not become a lawyer but a priest. The sudden death of his dearest friend and his own narrow escape from death by lightning decided him to become a priest and he entered a monastery of the St. Augustine order.

Every one of you interested in the story of the noble army, must read for himself the life of Martin Luther, for I can give you only a little of it here. It is full of heroic experiences — his first visit to Rome and what he said when he saw the great dome of St. Peter's, what he thought as he read the Bible in his little monastery cell, his appointment as lecturer in the University at Wittenberg and later, because he showed remarkable gifts as a preacher and had a splendid reputation among all who knew him, his position at the head of eleven monasteries. Honor and prosperity had come to him through the church. But he was not happy.

He felt the burden of all the sin and selfishness he saw about him. He felt the burden of his own sin and he had no personal knowledge of the love and mercy of God. The church had forgotten the story of the Prodigal Son. Then suddenly, with the help of a friend, he saw that the " good news " which Jesus asked his disciples to preach was the " forgiveness of sins." God became suddenly what Jesus said he was — an understanding Father, eager to save all his children. Luther read the beautiful promises of forgiveness and help and his soul was filled with happiness and joy. He *loved* God.

With this new idea of God, Martin Luther was obliged to oppose many things in the church. One was a custom which it had established of selling " *indulgences.*" Under this custom, when a person had committed a sin, he might, for a certain sum paid or gift given to the church, receive a letter of pardon. Luther felt that this must not continue and opposed it boldly. He preached especially against Tetzel, a man who sold these indulgences without teaching the need of repentance.

Luther wanted to debate the whole question of forgiveness, pardons and many other things, so he went to the door of the church as you would go to the bulletin board in school and nailed upon it the

paper upon which he had written ninety-five statements for debate. These are known in history as the " Ninety-Five Theses."

The great changes in the story of the church made by those Theses which were soon being read all over Germany, is one of the most interesting records of history.

At first the Pope in Rome paid no attention to the complaints about Luther, for he had not accused the Pope of selling indulgences, but only his representatives, Tetzel and others. But finally the Pope was persuaded that Luther was a dangerous person and sent a representative to command him to cease teaching the doctrines named in the Theses. Luther said he *must* preach them because he believed them true. The Pope then declared him a heretic. Luther appealed to a Council. In thinking the matter over, he decided that no Council has any right whatever to tell a man what he *must* believe but only the right to teach him what he *may* believe — that the Bible, not the Council, was the standard of truth. He made these statements in a great public debate.

The Pope now told Luther that, within sixty days, he must repent and take back all he had said in the Theses. " This I cannot do," said Luther and burned the letter containing the command.

One more opportunity was given to young

Luther to save himself — he was summoned to Wurms where a great company of princes, doctors and priests, presided over by the emperor, had met to command him to take back his Theses. They hoped that in the presence of that great, brilliant, hostile company of royalty and men of learning, the young monk would retract. But he was without fear. He was quiet and modest, and seemed often to be praying as he waited. But when the moment came that he should rise and recant, he said the words that the Protestant church will always remember.

" Unless I am convinced by Scripture and reason, I cannot retract anything. Here I take my stand. I cannot do otherwise. So help me God. Amen."

There was a great silence when Martin Luther finished. The emperor and his company talked over what he had said and declared their agreement with the Pope — that Luther was a heretic.

But Luther was not to die as the brave John Huss had died. Friends disguised themselves, captured him and took him safely away to a castle in Wartburg where he lived for a year and worked on a translation of the Bible into the common German tongue.

There came a day when the city of Wittenberg, under the protection of friendly rulers, asked Luther to return. He preached for eight days tell-

ing the people that " the just shall live by faith, Christ can and will forgive sins and that Christians must love their neighbors." Great numbers believed him and welcomed such a gospel with joy. Those who accepted his teaching, built their churches and schools, wrote new services, learned the hymns that Luther wrote and called themselves after his name, *Lutherans.*

Many sorrowful and difficult days were ahead for Luther and the new church. Rulers of the empire changed, the government fell into new hands and the Roman church which had in so many places been banished and its property taken, was permitted to come back. Luther's followers *protested* against this in a great, formal protest, but they were defeated. Because they *protested* so vigorously, they were called " The Protestants," as all non-Roman Catholic Christians are called to this day.

You will read in the life of Luther about his marriage, about his little son, about the books and the beautiful hymns that he wrote. It is a most interesting story. So Luther escaped death at the hands of his enemies and died at the age of sixty-three, in the little town where he was born. He lived long enough to hear his faith preached and his hymns sung all over Germany and to know that people in many other lands had accepted

his teachings and called themselves by his name. Fearless, honest, sincere, unselfish and kindly, undaunted by emperors, kings and popes, he stood bravely for his faith and more than any one man influenced the history of the Western church.

What Luther began in Germany, John Calvin, another of the company of the undaunted, did in Switzerland and John Knox did later in Scotland. There is no more fascinating story in church history than John Calvin teaching, preaching, setting up his new government in Geneva.

The record of the desperate struggle for freedom for the church in England and Scotland is a story of most bitter and terrible persecution. Hate stalked like a triumphant tyrant through the land. When the Catholic group was in power, the Protestants suffered every humiliation, their property was taken, they were tortured, tormented and put to death. When the Protestants were in power, the Catholics received the same treatment at their hands.

Slowly, so very slowly that all but the undaunted grew discouraged, the world was trying to learn to permit men to choose the way in which they should worship God and to decide for themselves what they should believe. When the early disciples told the people stories of Jesus, his words, his teachings, his acts, their listeners felt great

confidence in what they said, for they had seen Jesus and heard him speak. Later, those who taught the people had known intimately the men who knew Jesus and they had confidence also in them. But when all these men were dead and the worship of God changed into an elaborate service where Christ was almost forgotten, as you have seen, Christianity grew weak and only the few undaunted souls kept it from utter defeat. Now the printing-press and the Bible translated into common tongues brought the words of Christ and the teachings of the apostles back to the people. But as they read the book, to some the words meant one thing, to others quite the opposite. There were no disciples to whom they could appeal and say, " What *was* it that Jesus meant when he said . . . ? " So, because of differing interpretations, many groups were formed within the Protestant church. Sometimes they disagreed over very little things, sometimes over things that must affect the whole future of the faith. Calvin said certain verses of Scripture meant one thing and would change the whole government of the church. John Knox said it meant an entirely different thing and many followed his teaching. But amidst all the disagreement, the common people were learning about Christ, believing in him and trying to obey him.

Just as the pagans, becoming Christian, wanted to keep the feasts and burn the incense because they enjoyed or loved the old way of worship, so some of the Roman Catholics who became convinced of the truth of the new doctrines, wanted to keep parts of the service or parts of the government which were dear to them. Others, like George Fox, a most wonderful Christian, said that everything connected with the old forms of worship was wrong and all must be left behind. So you who, today, unite with the church, find it divided into many groups each with its own way of worship and its own interpretation of the Bible. The Anglican church, the Episcopal church, the Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Quakers and so many others one cannot name them all, came into being after Luther nailed his Theses to the door of the old church at Wittenberg. Many came into being after the King James version of the Bible was put into the hands of the people. Some lasted but a little while and then died out. Man was trying very hard to stand for freedom, to give his brothers the rights he claimed for himself. So there were churches with bishops and churches with no bishops; churches with a book of common prayer and a litany, and churches with only simple singing of psalms and reading of Scripture. There were very beautiful church

buildings and plain, unadorned buildings even more simple than those of the early church. Each group felt that it had discovered the truth and it loved and honored the heroic, undaunted souls who founded it. You who read this page may have joined or will join churches that differ greatly in name and service and doctrine. You should know the founders of your church, you should know about their special work in the noble army and honor them for their courage and their willingness to teach their faith or to suffer and die for it.

You must learn also what some of us, long members of the army, have *not* learned — how to respect the faith of those who differ with you and how to love and honor all members of the noble army, that it may be said of you as it was of the early Christians, that by this you know that they have been with *Christ*, because they love their brothers.

I confess that when I read over the names on the honor roll of the undaunted souls of the noble army, I turn with deepest reverence to a little group in which there are many great names. They left the kindly shores of Holland where they had fled for refuge, stopped for a while at their old home, and then, one hundred and two of them, in a ship so small that one hardly dare think of even sailing along the coast in it today, they crossed

the wide, lonely ocean — no steamship lane with boats greeting one another by wireless across the waves; no help if distress should come. It took them many long weeks to cross. It takes me six days or less.

They landed on a cold, bleak shore with only the bitter wind in the trees, the cry of wild beasts, the stealthy tread of savages to welcome them. But it is not for that I honor them most. Other heroic groups had braved the danger of forest and savage and sea. Other groups had left the homes they dearly loved. But there was something different about this group. It was the greatness of the purpose for which they came that I honor them with so deep a reverence. I find no words to express it. They came to establish a home, not where they alone should be safe from persecution by their enemies but a refuge to which all men might come and "worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences." Later comers in other companies, more than once, forgot the high purpose of these Pilgrim seekers of liberty and justice for all and drove honest worshipers from the colonies of New England, but in the main, this new land, discovered while the old world was in the midst of cruel persecutions, became a safe harbor of protection and freedom. To it the heroic Huguenots came. The Quakers found com-

fort in its liberty. Whenever persecution abroad brought pain and suffering to earnest souls, the Atlantic offered a highway to the promised land — and they came to it by fifties, hundreds, thousands, until churches of many names were built in the forests of New England, in the mountains of Virginia, throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

That freedom is *your* great inheritance. Neither sword, nor wild beast, nor tidal river, nor stake with fagots ready to be lighted, awaits you; no government stands ready to banish or imprison you, as you unite with the church you have chosen and become a member of the noble army. Look with reverence at the names on the long list of the undaunted who, through their sufferings, won this liberty for you. Think with gratitude of the thousands of other undaunted souls, men and boys, women and girls, whose names we do not know but whose faithfulness, courage and righteousness entitle them also to a place upon the great honor roll; "their names," says the prophet, "are known in heaven."

The sword and the fire are not here, but selfishness is in the world, jealousy is here, hate is here; the foes of that gospel which Jesus gave to his disciples still live, the victory has not yet been won. It is *your* battle now. They, all

young when they started out upon the road of courage, have flung the torch to you. It is you who must keep up the struggle for liberty and justice but most of all for *love*. Not the weak and sentimental thing we sometimes call by that name but the love that understands, shares and serves. *Hope will help the world, faith will give it strength, but love will save it.*

Last month I heard three thousand young people, every one a member of the church, singing a hymn. The words rang out gloriously clear and strong: —

> "Faith of our fathers, we will *love*
> Both friend and foe in all *our* strife,
> And preach thee too, as *love* knows how,
> By kindly words and virtuous life.
> Faith of our fathers — holy faith,
> We will be *true* to *thee* till death."

They were in earnest, it was a promise, a pledge. Will you join them? If enough of you will, what a triumphant victory the new company of the undaunted will some day bring to the needy world!

Chapter VII
I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

CHAPTER VII

I Pledge Allegiance

No one could stand overseas during the war and watch long lines of our khaki-clad boys moving up to the front to meet danger, agony and death, see the brave young faces on which was no trace of the coward, hear them call out words of laughing challenge to each other as they marched on and on through the rain, the mud, the cold, without a feeling of pride that these were *Americans*. No one could see our boys come back — those who did come back — from the field, wounded and suffering, with no word of bitterness or complaint, but instead, some terribly wounded boy insisting that his neighbor be cared for first, without saying to himself, " *and this is America.*" No one could witness the indomitable courage of some one of our boys in the hospital as he heard the verdict given as gently as possible, but telling him the terrible truth, " You will never see again," without saying to himself in silent and solemn pride, " *He* is an American." When one saw our men in khaki in the streets of Paris and London where temptations to sin and shame were so great that only the

strongest could overcome them and watched boys again and again resolutely pass by, refusing to lower their standards or lose their characters, one rejoiced that these were Americans.

When one saw our nurses in hospitals calmly doing their work while the shrapnel from the air raids fell about them, when he saw young women come from behind the lines after driving for long hours the field ambulances filled with wounded, to the place where life might be given back to them, it was with deepest gratitude that he said, "America has made these also."

I was glad in those great and terrible days to be an American; not because war is right or ought to be the way by which men test their heroes; war is wrong, war is deadly waste, war is an unreasonable way for thinking human beings to settle their disputes and differences; it was because men, young and eager to live, with the right to be happy in work or study or play, were great enough to endure the frightful horror of war for the sake of others — *this* made me proud to be an American. It was not because all the soldiers in our army and navy were brave, some were not, but because the great majority of that army was unfailing in daring courage and absolute fearlessness, that I rejoiced in being also an American. It was not because all the soldiers in

the army and navy were honest, clean-minded, victorious over the terrible temptations that met them, thousands were not, hundreds were utterly defeated by sin who could never have been defeated by gas or shot or shell. But the great majority of that host of youth was honest, high-minded and true, they struggled against evil within them and around them *and they won* — it was this that made me glad I am an American.

About two years ago, I took a trip around the world. Again and again, on my journey, I was glad that I am an American. When I saw the schools and great hospitals built in China by Americans to help her in her struggle with disease and ignorance, I rejoiced. When I saw the hospitals and colleges built in India by Americans to help Hindu and Moslem girls escape from the superstition and ignorance that handicap the life of girlhood in that land, I was glad to be an American. When I saw the Armenian refugee children, ragged, dirty, helpless, starving, being fed and clothed; when I saw in Central Europe the hundreds of suffering children and hungry men and women being kept alive by American food and clothing; when I heard the stories of some who had escaped from Russia, stories that almost broke one's heart, and learned that the only ray of hope in that dark sky was the hurrying

relief trains and boats carrying food and clothing and medicines, it was with gratitude that I remembered that I am an American.

It was not that America is faultless — she has so many faults and so great that, again and again, her failures make those who love her most, blush with shame. But the spirit of her people *is* great. The majority does love justice and is determined to treat all men with generosity. She is sincerely trying to act " with malice toward none and with charity toward all."

So when the great liner brought me back to America and I saw our flag floating in the air against a clear, blue sky, I saluted it with all my heart. I greeted it with prayer, with loyalty, with love. I knew, having seen the world, that under its protection all men have a greater opportunity to win success, secure education for their children, gain happiness and freedom than in any other land on earth. There are people who are poor, but their poverty cannot be compared with the poverty of India, China, the Near East. Little children suffer much, even under the Stars and Stripes, but their sufferings cannot be compared with what the children of those countries must endure. So, with reverence, I salute the flag, I pledge allegiance to all the great ideals it represents, to all that the spirit of the people for

whom it stands has accomplished, and for greater things which it will accomplish in long years to come. I rejoice to know that you who read this page salute it also and pledge allegiance with me.

As I honor the forces of our army and navy and these United States which, in days of trial, danger and death they represent, so I honor the men and women of that other noble army which, in days of hardship, danger and death, "fought the good fight and kept the faith," and so I honor the church which they represent. As I think of my country, seeing its failures and its sins, but remembering its dreams, its hopes, its great spirit, and pledge it my deepest allegiance, on my honor promising to be true to its best, so I think of my church. Knowing its failures and sins but remembering its hopes, its dreams, its great *spirit*, I pledge to it my deepest allegiance and on my honor promise to be true to its best. With me, so pledging allegiance, is a multitude almost too great to be numbered. They are in Japan and China, Africa, India and the Islands, the Near East and Europe and all over America, North and South. Many of them are young like you who are making your first pledge and promising your devoted service.

I think the church is worthy of their allegiance and *yours*. I think you have a right to be proud

of what it has tried to do to make life easier for men; of the schools which have followed wherever it went; of its hospitals, free to those too poor to pay; of the long list of its work for the welfare of fatherless, motherless children, the blind, the deaf, the lame, the old; of the laws protecting the ignorant and the poor for which it has fought and is fighting; of the challenges to unselfish living and high ideals which come from its pulpits; of the determination with which it keeps to its task, the hardest task man has ever set for himself — that of making proud, self-satisfied men and women whose gods are greed and gold, think of others and give their full share of service to the world; of the fact that no matter how dark the world's history, it has always had in its ranks those loyal to Jesus Christ and the God whom he declared to be the loving Father of all mankind. Something of its great struggle and of the heroes who were true to its best, you have read in these chapters. You know that as great souls were needed by America, and Washington and Lincoln with many others answered the need and led it into greater freedom and better service, so great souls were needed by the church, and the disciples, the apostles, the early martyrs, Wycliffe and Huss, Zwengli and Melancthon, Luther, Calvin and Knox and a host of others who came after

them, answered the need and led it on to greater freedom and better service. The need of our country now for leadership that will unite us, help us find true liberty and teach us how to share the burdens of the world is greater than ever before in our history. And the need of the church for leadership that will unite us, help us to find true liberty and teach us to bear one another's burdens, is just as great.

What if among you who, amidst the flowers, have joined the churches, large and small, all over America, such leaders are sitting today. No one dreamed when George Washington at fifteen sat reading his books, riding horseback over his father's estates or listening with intense interest to the stories of Indian warfare, or joining in the service of the little church, that the day would come when he should be the first President of a Republic such as had never been known before anywhere on earth. No one dreamed that Abraham Lincoln, a very poor, untrained, awkward, hard-working boy, struggling to buy books or to borrow them, that weary as he was he might spend half the night in study, would become the greatest of all Americans. If any one had prophesied it when Lincoln was fifteen, he would have been laughed to scorn.

No one dreamed that Peter, mending his nets

by the blue sea, a fisherman without advantages of the education of the schools of his day, would become the first great preacher of the Christian faith. No one dreamed that Paul, a brilliant young Hebrew, would forsake the company of the Pharisees and a life of comfort, to preach the new faith, as a prisoner in the great Roman capital. No one could dream that Martin, the miner's son, would become the great reformer who brought into being the Protestant church with its opportunity for greater freedom and progress. No one dreamed that a little band of Pilgrims taking their Bibles with them, writing their compact in the tiny ship that had brought them safely to shore, would ever found the great nation to which we have been pledging allegiance.

No one dreamed when those five boys sat under the haystack at Williams College, sheltered from the rain as they talked over the need of the non-Christian world for God and the good tidings of Christ, that they would become the leaders of a great procession of young men and women from every part of America to every corner of the globe, a brilliant company, every page of whose history is a record of sacrifice, boundless courage and love, a company still giving to the world names worthy of following, Morrison, Carey, Judson, Livingstone and the rest.

No one can prophesy *who* joined the noble army when *you* united with the church and pledged to it your service and love. Only the long future years will reveal that. It may be that you, reading this page now, will lead the various companies of the Protestant church, now called by many names, to *unite* for *service*, that together we may overcome the enemies of the religion of love that Jesus Christ died to give to the world. We shall perhaps always keep our honored names but you must help us, while we respect each other's differences, to stand together against wrong.

In the dark days of nineteen hundred eighteen, during the World War, when the Allies felt that they were fighting with " their backs against the wall," each struggling nobly but without a common plan, General Pershing wrote a letter to Marshal Foch. It is a wonderful letter. You can read it when you visit the Congressional Library at Washington. In this letter he says some things about the hopes and ambitions of the American Expeditionary Forces, but he feels that only the united strength of all the armies, under one commander, will defeat the enemy. Here is a paragraph from the letter: —

" There is, at this moment, no other question than that of fighting; our infantry, artillery, aviation, all that we have is yours to dispose of

as you will. Others are coming and will be as numerous as may be necessary. I have come to say to you that the American people would be proud to be engaged under you in the greatest battle of history."

That offer was accepted with words of appreciation and gratitude and Marshal Foch became Generalissimo for the united forces of the Allies and America.

Perhaps some day the church may say to itself as it looks at the enemies of righteousness: "We can never win this way. We must unite our forces under our one great Commander. All over the world, we must stand together against wrong — a great world company of Christians with a common plan, determined to defeat selfish ambitions and greed."

It may be that you who are learning that whenever leaders in the church spent their time in persecution of those who did not agree with them, it grew weak and was unable to conquer; whenever the church grew ambitious for its own glory, it became poor in spirit and could not overcome sin. But whenever it remembered Jesus Christ, accepted his leadership, studied his commands, prayed earnestly, spent its time in loving, unselfish service, it grew strong in spirit and was able to conquer the enemy.

So you will not think much about the things on which the various divisions of the church do *not* agree, you will think of the glorious messages on which it *does* agree.

" Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord."

" Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

" Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

" Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"; "And lo, I am with you always."

" This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

" If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."

" Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

" Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

" But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

" God is love."

On these great things and many more we can agree.

Dr. William Gilroy in a very beautiful letter tells the story of Nelson's two great officers who, because of differing opinions, had quarreled. But on that day of the great battle, as they saw the enemy fleet approaching, one said to the other, " Yonder is the *enemy* — shake hands." That is what you must help the church to say in the presence of the enemies of Jesus Christ and the kingdom he came to establish upon the earth. It may well be that the very ones who will do this are reading these words *now*.

If you will help the church to do these things, then in the years ahead, young people of the church of *that* day, a hundred years, two hundred years from now, will look back with pride and joy to you and what you have done. They will thank God for your courage, strength, and wisdom, as you today thank God for the noble army with its loyal disciples and the great company of its undaunted souls who followed after them. They will read of the days when *you* joined the church

and showed it that no true follower of Jesus Christ can hate or let prejudice rule his action; when you helped it stand together with such strength that the enemies which threatened it met defeat, and your courage, faith and service made a better world.

Thinking of these things Sunday after Sunday when you sit in the church, thinking of them morning and evening when you pray, thinking of them as you study the words Christ spoke, thinking of the kingdom he means to build, I am sure you will want to join with a great company of young Christians all over the world who are saying: —

" I pledge allegiance to Jesus Christ.

" I pledge allegiance to his kingdom of love.

" I pledge allegiance to the church whose great task and high honor it is to build that kingdom upon the earth."

On the day when we welcome you into the noble army, it seems to us that the flowers are more beautiful, the music more glorious, our faith more steadfast, because we believe you will accomplish the things for which we pray and even greater things than we can dream. If you love God with all your hearts, you *can*. If you love men — selfish, ambitious, proud and needing help, or poor and discouraged, needing friendship; if you love

the world's little children, suffering for the sins and failures of men, you *will*.

The organ is playing the recessional: —

"A noble army, men and boys,
The matron and the maid,"

Then —

"Who follows in their train?"

it asks in stirring tones of mighty challenge.

I can answer. I *know*. . . . *You* do.

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